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MARTLET

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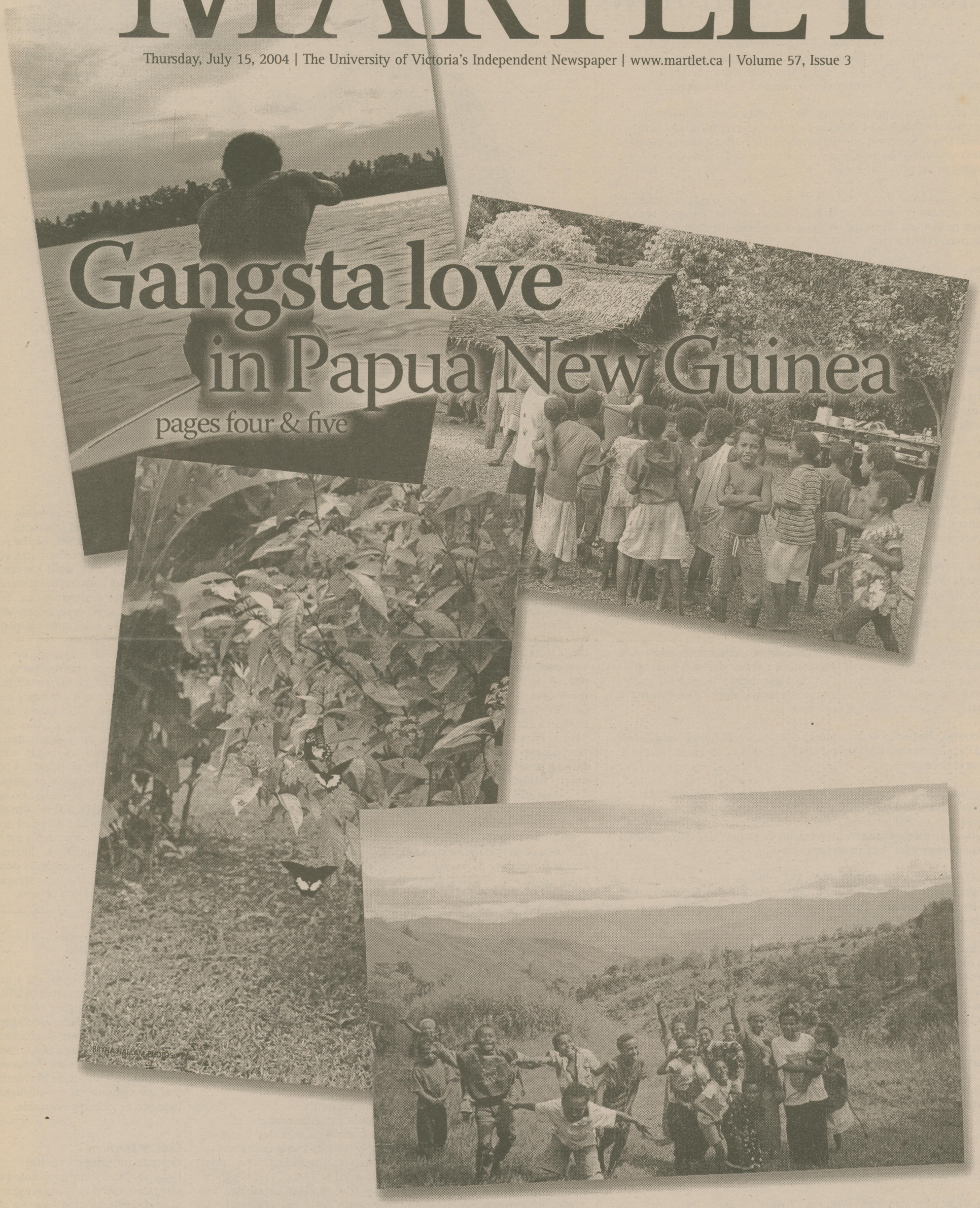

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Editorial

Electoral reform now

So: the election's come and gone. Votes were cast, a wavering sort of decision was made, and the incumbent Liberals managed to keep some semblance of power in Parliament. It was an absolute mess of a campaign, though still worthy of some respect for its unpredictability.

First of all, if you didn't make it out to vote, then shame on you. And if you missed a vote in an extremely tight race (like Victoria, where the Liberal David Anderson nudged out the NDP by just a couple thousand votes), you should be punching yourself in the neck right now for not heading to the polls on June 28.

Voter turnout was the second lowest ever in Canada, at approximately 61 per cent. Apathy—which, really, gets blamed for everything—is seen as a major reason, but it isn't the only one: Canadians just don't feel as if their vote matters much.

That's why we need to try a proportional representation (PR) system: it is the only way of showing that every vote counts.

As stats on Fair Vote Canada's website show, PR would have given Canadians a very different Parliament in this past election. The Liberals would have received about 113 seats (instead of 135); the Conservatives 91 seats (instead of 99); the Bloc 38 seats (instead of 54); the NDP a whopping 48 (instead of 19); and the Greens 13 seats (rather than none).

Why the massive disparity? It's because the current system doesn't actually reward seats based on the popular vote, but instead on the basis of ridings. Despite the fact the Green Party received over 500,000 votes, they didn't get a single seat. The Bloc, who received only three times as many votes as the Greens, got 54 of them.

Another example: the West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast riding is the largest in the country, with a population of 124,572; the smallest is Labrador with only 27,864. Despite the difference in potential votes cast of about 100,000, only one seat is still awarded for each riding. That isn't very representational.

Critics say that with each party having such a presence in Parliament, Canada would see endless alliances and minority governments. They're right: Italy had a similar system in place for more than 40 years, but abandoned it in 1992 because of short-lived coalition governments and extreme instability.

Honestly though, Canadian politics are already relatively unstable, so it wouldn't be anything new. It would mean a slower decision-making process than we have now, but it would also mean that each MP's say would make a real difference, and would keep majority governments from ramming bills through unabated.

Of course, the results of last month's election would have been different had Paul Martin not tried to frighten NDP voters into leaning a little more to the right.

Ingeniously, the Prime Minister helped skew the election results by pushing strategic voting as a means to keep the Conservatives out of power, a move that ultimately backfired in several ridings (including a couple here on the island), where a swing from the NDP to the Liberals meant a victory for the Conservative candidate.

And because for the first time we in BC could see the rest of the country's results before our polling stations actually came close to closing, it isn't far-fetched to assume a fair number of Island folks thought twice about their choice of a candidate.

All in all, it was messy. For 2008, let's try and clean it up, and have a little fun too. Make voting mandatory, so that every Canadian ventures out to the polling station. Some countries, such as Australia and Belgium, have mandatory voting and voter registration in place. Those who don't make it to the polls are assessed a fine. Consequently, Australia's voter turnout has been upwards of 95 per cent for the past few elections.

Throw in some proportional representation so we're free to vote with our hearts instead of through convoluted, strategic logic. And then get ready for a Canada that is actually representative of its citizens. Sure, it will probably be run by a minority government and will take forever to get anything done, but at least it will be fair.

Editorial topics are decided at weekly editorial meetings and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all staff members.

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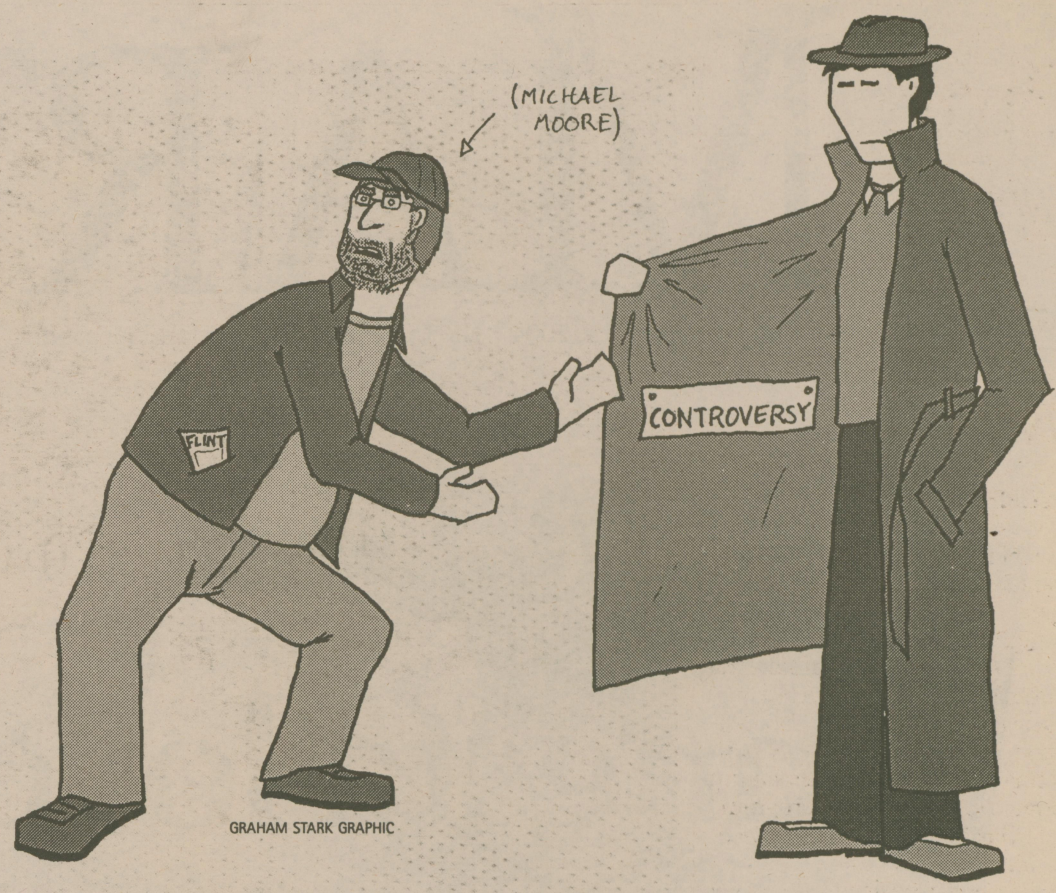

"More! I need more! I need this shit to live!"

The right way to approach university

by David Rice

In my life, going to university was more assumed than anything. I'm not rich or from a family of university graduates but my father was a practical man who thought logically about life. His generation grew up in different times though, and from my ignorant perspective today, times past appear less complex. University was an asset that would pay off in the future in terms of money, stability and competency—back then a university degree was a tried and true avenue to success.

For previous generations a four-year degree translated into better earning potential more easily. During my father's time many job sectors were still in their infancy and technology was beginning to be applied in new ways. Before my father graduated he had been offered two jobs, as well as the one he chose to stay with for over 35 years. I was talking with a man who graduated in the 1960s, he said that back then computers were so new that companies hired people with math degrees to operate them. Today you can get a similar job with a certificate or diploma program, which offers more in-depth education in a specific area.

In today's British Columbia a person with an arts degree has to be prepared to pay their dues much longer, and for less pay, then a person with a trade or community college technical credential. Going oversees or to the United States won't be much different. Recent studies found that only one-third of university graduates actually use their degree after school, resulting in the lowest percent of grads going to work and the highest ever per cent planning to get more education, in part because of an overcrowded labour market.

University degrees are still good investments for reasons other than material ones. Researchers and employers alike emphasize the interpersonal, communication and life skills that a general degree has the potential to instill in graduates. To some these qualities may sound peripheral to the material aspects, but studies show these skills are often the difference between the good life and a shorter, frustrating one. But there is a catch: experiences, and what we take from them, depend upon our perspective.

If we approach university, or any experience, from a narrow perspective we may find life to be a self-fulfilled prophecy of inadequacy and incompleteness. During my first two years of university I was very impatient and for a long time I thought that real life began after school out in the workforce. I felt such a sense of urgency to get out there and work, to make money and gain credibility, that I lost motivation for school and dropped out. In my impatience I wasted a lot of time. Today I feel much different about my university degree. I don't think of it as simply a piece of paper signifying my payment of dues.

Letters

Stop the rabbit "slaughter"

In regard to the article about eating rabbits on campus, I'd like to say that I'm very worried. As a humane educator for many years, it is disturbing to see such pathetic disregard for living creatures. Just because some people see rabbits as "pests," or non-native species, does not give them carte blanche to do with them as they please.

Having had a "house rabbit," it pains me to know that people have such little respect for truly delightful creatures. Rabbits can be litter-trained, spayed and neutered, and treated like a member of the family living in the house, just as dogs and cats are. They can get along quite well with other rabbits (if spayed and neutered), and with other species. They are affectionate, humorous, curious, boisterous, and fascinating creatures.

Please stop the slaughter. To deal with the rabbit overpopulation, it might be wise to call upon rabbit rescue organizations to help with the capture, spay and neuter, and possibly rehoming of the rabbits. They will be happy to educate the students and the public about the wholly negative aspects of releasing rabbits into the wild, and about the nature of rabbits in general.

You're in the business of teaching, so why not teach compassion, for heaven's sake?

Nora Lott
Vancouver, BC

UVic students should be ashamed

Your article on the capture and eating of rabbits living on campus is callous and unfeeling. The operative word is "living", not slaughtering! Your student population has obviously little or no conscience. First, apparently releasing animals previously kept as pets, with no thought of their ability to survive, and then casually accepting the premise that they can then become food. Do they do the same thing with cats and dogs at the end of semester? You should all be ashamed of yourselves!

Jo MacClelland
Walnut Creek, California

More on bunny-eating

Obviously you want a reaction to that ridiculous article on bunnies for dinner. Really funny. All I can say is that I am glad I went to UBC. One would think higher education would produce more intelligent people. As if former vegetarians would consider eating rabbits. Pretty dumb in more ways than one. Promoting the slaughter of animals that are obviously more intelligent than you is quite reprehensible.

Joanna Schofer

Crystal Gardens destruction disheartening

I was very sad and disappointed to learn the Crystal Gardens are going to be destroyed to make way for industrial development.

The Gardens have been captured by the ears, eyes, and cameras of thousands of people from around the world who have reveled in this place. It is a dynamic tourist attraction.

I had the opportunity to visit the Gardens during the Writers' Union AGM banquet in Victoria and was profoundly impressed. I hope to be able to visit the Gardens on another trip.

Nellie P. Strowbridge
Newfoundland

Profs work to save world

by Andrew Cienski

One hundred of the world's top scientists studying global warming sit on the UN panel for Climate Change (IPCC), and as of this year seven per cent of these are on the University of Victoria payroll.

"The naming of [seven] UVic scientists to this prestigious UN panel reinforces the world class stature of our climate research program," said Martin Taylor, UVic's vice-president research.

The scientists called to the panel work in either or both of the research labs on campus: the School of Ocean Science (SEOS) and the Environment Canada's Canadian Centre for Climate Modeling and Analysis (CCCma).

"Having both these labs on campus is a real coup for the university," explained Dr. Andrew Weaver, a UVic prof and Environment Canada physicist, citing the grouping as one reason why UVic is one of the five top climate study centres in the world.

According to Taylor, over the next three years the UN panel will review the most recent published and peer-reviewed research in order to assess the "impact of pollution on society and the economy," and will provide suggestions of what can be done to mitigate climate change.

The UVic-based members of the panel are: Drs. Ken Denman, Greg Flato, John Fyfe (all part of CCCma and SEOS), Nathan Gillett (SEOS), Terry Prowse (UVic's geography department), Weaver (SEOS), and Francis Zwiers (CCCma, SEOS and UVic's math department).

Dr. Weaver has been a part of the 16-year-old panel since shortly after receiving his doctorate in 1990. He was part of the 1996 UN assessment that went a long way in showing the human influence on climate. The results were strong enough to have set the foundation for the Kyoto Accord. This kind of effect on public policy is the ultimate intention of the current panel.

But of course there is frustration.

As Weaver points out, public policy makers are elected for four-year terms, and results of climate mitigation policies are 100 years down the road. Policy makers need convincing there is a need for new policies, but the fact is there is no need for more evidence, Weaver said. Scientists universally accept that the increase in forest fires and the melting of the permafrost are due to climate change.

The UN panel will strive once again to present the evidence of pollution's effect on climate in such a way as to leave no room for doubt.

Weaver says more active development of alternative energy resources is needed; the time for deliberation is past. More science to develop solutions, like electric cars, and power grids to run cars and buses on.

"Why are we advocating offshore drilling," Weaver asked, "when we should be educating people on the necessity for alternatives?"

Weaver advises anyone interested in global warming to focus on physics and math rather than environmental science, a mistake he says many students make.

RYAN BARRY PHOTO

Sandcastles so grand you could almost live in them—at least until the tide comes in

Hundreds of people attended the first annual Cadboro Bay Sand Sculpting Competition on June 27. The fun in the sun event raised $5000 for the Victoria NEED crisis information line.

US empire may crumble by 2040

by Mike Berry

NIC HUME PHOTO

Journalist Gwynne Dyer warns that American isolationism isn't the solution for the world's woes.

The next 25 years are critical as the world prepares itself for a new order by 2040, asserted the respected journalist Gwynne Dyer in a lecture last month at UVic.

By then, Dyer said, China will have the world's largest economy followed by the United States, India, Brazil and Russia.

His lecture 'Worst case: a Neo-Orwellian World' tackled what he sees to be the two major stumbling blocks to a safe transition to this new world order: American isolationism and Islamists.

Because of these, he said, "we are in the middle of a train wreck." This is why the next 25 years are critical. "How do you get [to 2040] without World War Three?"

Crucial to American foreign policy is the neo-conservative Pax Americana, which calls for US dominance in global affairs in order to expand peace and freedom in the world.

According to Dyer, the US wants to be "judge, jury, and executioner [in a world where] American values will flourish."

"[Pax Americana] proceeds from the belief that the United States is an indispensible country of peace, [which] can't be achieved unless it's a copy of the American way," he explained.

The policy was outlined in "Rebuilding America's Defense"—written well before September 11 by a group that includes current members of the George W. Bush administration—and was reflected in Bush's "National Security Strategy of the United States of America," issued in 2002.

The strategy calls for American security to overthrow the current world order. This means working against the United Nations and the new international court of justice, which the US has already proven to disavow.

Thus to Dyer, the invasion of Iraq was not about oil. It was about this neo-conservative project with oil as an added bonus to "pay off friends."

The United States could have chosen any of the 'axis of evil' countries to begin its project, he said, but Iraq would have been the easiest to execute and sell, due to previous conflicts.

Islamists—who try to incite the masses to revolt against Western influence—are the reason there is a war on terror today, Dyer said, though he was quick to point out that Islamists are not representative of all Muslims.

"Terrorism is a technique...a weapon of the weak...a form of political jiu-jitsu," he said. The technique, known and studied by military colleges throughout the world, is to trick a state into furthering your cause; into over-reacting.

Dyer said Osama bin Laden used 9/11 to provoke the US into attacking, ultimately getting the masses into Islamic camps to pursue its cause.

Dyer branded the past 15 years following the end of the Cold War as 'sunny times,' but a time when Islam went into decline.

"[In 1990] the Islamist movement began trying to take over...but the masses never wanted to live under Islamic rule." September 11 was the pinnacle of the many terror attacks that took place worldwide over the years.

He says that Osama expected the Americans to attack Afghanistan, like Russia did, ultimately leading to greater mobilization.

"American response in Afghanistan was not a problem," he said. "Everybody wanted to help." He joked that even Russia offered to send troops. Unfortunately for bin Laden, the battle was relatively quick and with few casualties, thus Muslims did not feel it necessary to coalesce.

Dyer worries that the American isolationist policy will lead back to the days of a "world of alliances... if other powers believe they have to confront US power."

"Rebuilding America's Defense" can be found on the Internet at www.newamericancentury.org.

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BRYNA HALLAM PHOTOS

Gangsta love in Pa

by Bryna Hallam

Someone screams. Someone else laughs. My three traveling companions, along with the other dozen passengers, grab the edge of their bunks as waves toss our boat from side to side, up and down, over and over.

The power is off. Again. "Brownouts" aren't unusual in Papua New Guinea, located just north of Australia in the South Pacific, but we are on the MV Rita, a passenger ship making its way south along the coast from Madang to Lae, and I figure that the usual suspects—power lines downed by the wind, trees or the landowner's axe—aren't to blame. Having already spent four weeks in PNG visiting my boyfriend Patrick, I know it's unlikely that I'll get an answer as to why there's no light, so I do what the locals do: shrug and roll over.

I switch on my flashlight. A quick look around shows Patrick, his brother's girlfriend Anna-Marie, and Patricia, another Canadian volunteer, flat on their backs. I smile smugly to myself, glad that I am protected from seasickness by the handful of Gravol I took earlier in the evening.

When we disembark after 15 hours on the Rita, it is in Finschhafen, a small town halfway between Madang and Lae. It is one a.m. and there is no way in to town. We are stranded at the dock until morning.

Due to his having been a volunteer in Papua New Guinea for over a year, Patrick knows that we aren't safe in the small concrete waiting room. Despite the guards, the bars on the windows and the locks on the door, we could be shot, stabbed, hacked to bits with a bush knife, raped.

The alternative is to get back on the Rita, continue to Lae, and take a public motor vehicle (PMV)—a mini-van crammed with 15 people and their luggage—back to Finschhafen. Being robbed seems preferable to enduring more choppy seas and hours in a PMV, so we settle in for the night.

I am soon punished for my arrogance on the boat. If you can get seasick, can you also get landsick? The earth is churning under my feet. I wash down two more Gravol with some warm water and collapse on Anna-Marie's Therm-a-Rest, willing the room to stop spinning and trying to ignore the flies crawling into my ears and nose.

Morning comes, but fails to bring a single PMV with it. A man informs us that there aren't any boats scheduled to arrive or depart for hours, and no PMVs are coming.

We hike to the road, which is little more than a path cut through the jungle, uneven and deeply rutted. We're surprised to find the roads around Madang are a smoothly paved gift from Australia. Aid money keeps them that way, to the point where perfectly good roads are ripped up in order to be maintained.

A truck stops just as the rain begins to fall. Women headed to market and schoolchildren shift to let us pile our packs in the back and ourselves into the cab. We are soon rattling towards town.

A bridge slips into view. It appears to be solidly built, its thick iron girders criss-crossing the river. Up close, we can see that the planks that used to make up the floor of the bridge are worn, broken and missing, leaving gaps wide enough for a tire—possibly the entire truck—to slip through. A group of men shuffles the boards around, adding thin metal grates to some sections in order to cover the holes.

We slowly roll over the bridge, the planks shifting and sliding under the truck's wide wheels. Anna-Marie pokes her head out the window and peers through the holes to the river below. I crouch in my seat, and carefully avoid looking anywhere but at my hands clenched in my lap.

The truck lurches and my side of the vehicle slowly drops through the boards.

I swear loudly and prepare for the long fall. The driver calmly puts the car into reverse. The wheels spin on the slippery boards, jostling them. For an instant we sink even further into the gaping hole beneath us. Suddenly, the wheels catch and we are once again on top of the boards, ready to try again.

This is the paradox of aid in Papua New Guinea. There is money to maintain roads, but not to rebuild this bridge. State-of-the-art libraries are erected without any books to fill them. A glance at the shelves reveals Maeve Binchy novels and old magazines donated by church groups and Rotarians.

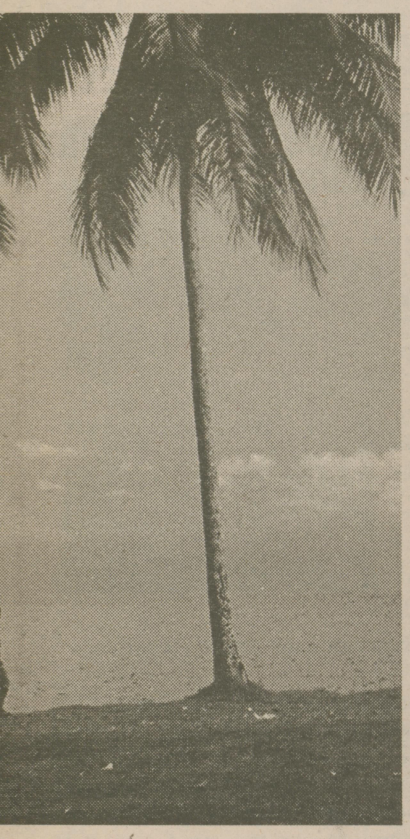
Somehow, we manage to cross the bridge, and within minutes are in Finschhafen. We hope to travel from here to the Tami Islands—12 kilometres and 40 minutes in a banana boat away.

We decide to search for boats to the islands at the dock in town. To our surprise there are not only no boats to the Tami Islands around, there are no boats at all. At a loss, we walk to Dregerhafen.

We wander onto the high school grounds and are approached by Lucille, an English teacher. She gives us a tour, and informs us that the teachers have not been paid for weeks and the school has run out of money to buy food.

According to Lucille, the money intended for the school was given to a stationery store instead. Probably a friend of someone in the government, she confides. This is not an isolated incident— we later learn that in the Western Highlands province, the teachers have not been paid for almost a year.

Lucille invites us home and introduces us to her husband Jason. His family is from the Tami Islands, and since he's not working now, he will not only arrange transportation, but accompany us as well. We eagerly agree to this plan, exclaim how friendly and helpful Lucille and Jason are, and marvel at this great stroke of luck. Ex-pats regularly tell us how dangerous Papua New Guinea is but, without exception, everyone we have met has been friendly and willing to go out of their way for us.



apua New Guinea

Two days later, we approach the islands. It is paradise. The islands are lined with white beaches, and palm trees sway in the breeze. Reefs ring the islands and fish are visible in the warm water. Islanders meet us, smiling and offering a singsong morning greeting.

With Jason as our guide, we spend the days exploring the islands and snorkeling in the sheltered waters between the islands. He arranges boat transportation between the islands and negotiate fish and rice for our dinner. In return, we feed him and give him a mosquito net to sleep under.

At night we build a fire to keep the mosquitoes away. Jason tells us stories about the islands while we drink sweet tea and do our best to follow along. From what we can gather, a spirit lives on one of the small islands. In its natural form, it is a giant seven-headed snake, but it also appears as a man.

During the Second World War, American soldiers went to the island and found the spirit. They took it to the States, where it told them how to make the atomic bomb.

When Jason was young, a boy was attacked by the spirit, who was angry because his mask was not being taken care of. The spirit struck the boy, leaving a mark on his shoulder and causing him to fall into a never-ending sleep. He was taken to the hospital, where he woke up, but only after the old men pled with the spirit.

Jason whispers that the spirit can also be seen at night riding a winged horse between the islands, wearing a feathered cap and playing a panpipe. We ask if he has seen the spirit.

"Oh yes," he says. "You will see it too."

I suspect that Jason is trying his best to scare us, especially when he mentions that the spirit likes white women, and throws us a salacious grin. He says that people aren't as scared as they used to be, since they have already abandoned their spirit houses for churches, swapping their spirits for Jesus. Despite the influence of missionaries, the village still retains some of its traditions, and the spirit's island home remains deserted.

We ask Jason more about himself. He tells us how Lucille, pregnant and on her own, waited for him while he was in jail. He was behind bars for two years before being released on bail. Once out, he skipped town, missing his court appearance.

He has been living on the run ever since.

"What were you in for?" we ask hesitantly.

"Break and enter." A B&E carries a sentence of 18 to 24 months in Papua New Guinea.

But Jason also faced an attempted murder charge, as he fired at a number of people during the robbery. He also has strong gang ties. After he was taken in, the two officers involved in the arrest were hunted down, shot and raped by his friends.

We take a moment to digest this information, to reconcile the image of a gangster with this quiet, personable man. The atmosphere is tense, and we are uncertain what to say or do. Now we know why he said people respected and feared him, why our trip has gone so smoothly, why people have jumped to do as he said. The conversation tapers off and we head to bed, quiet and subdued.

Morning chases some of our fears away, but as Patricia says, "Boy, was I uncomfortable." We give Jason the first cup of tea, and he says it is because we are scared of him now. He is joking, but no one corrects him.

It is easy to momentarily forget, to see Jason as just our helpful guide, but not so easy to fit the two pieces of his life together. How can someone be so helpful and friendly and be a criminal? How can you kiss your baby daughter with the same mouth that orders another women to be raped?

In the course of a recent police investigation, a 13-year-old girl who was raped was taken back to the scene of the crime by a police officer, who allegedly raped her. It is likely that her family, if not the entire community, will seek some sort of revenge. In the past, ritual warfare was common between tribes, and conflicts often exploded over land disputes and payback feuds. They still do. The idea of payback still exists—which is why Jason's friends went after the police officers that arrested him.

Papua New Guinea has policed itself in this way for centuries. In theory, the threat of having to compensate someone deterred people from committing a wrong in the first place. The conflict we experience in deciding what to think of Jason mirrors what the country itself is going through, and seems to arise from cultural differences.

Parts of the country are less than 100 years out of the jungle, having had their first contact with outsiders in the 1930s. The church and the West have laid their beliefs, morals and rules over the traditional ones, and it is an uneasy mix. The culture hasn't changed as quickly as the forces governing it, so that the people are living under laws that don't reflect their culture or way of life. From our point of view, it seems a ridiculous idea in the first place.

In the end, we turn a blind eye and try to find some balance between our own morals and Papua New Guinean culture, and attempt to refrain from judging either the country or Jason too harshly. It becomes something of a joke between us, as we talk about our bodyguard. In truth, we don't want to talk about it, because we don't know any of the answers. It is easier to laugh, and forget.

When we get back to Finschhafen, Jason decides to accompany us to the boat. PMVs in line to cross the bridge are often held up, and our white skin makes us prime targets. He knows that if he is there, a would-be thief will quickly realize his mistake and leave.

As we board the boat Jason shakes our hands. We look back from the deck and watch him walk away.

We are on our own again, and for the first time since I arrived in Papua New Guinea I feel vulnerable.

'Net makes comics fun

by Tracey Coulter

Growing up I thought it ironic that comics in newspapers were called "funnies." Family Circus, For Better or For Worse and the painfully preachy B.C., along with many others, are as funny as a barium enema. But the medium of comic (not to be confused with the comic "book") has been saved by, of all things, the Internet.

Online comics have been around for about as long as the Internet and are mainly done by enthusiastic amateurs with a penchant for doodling.

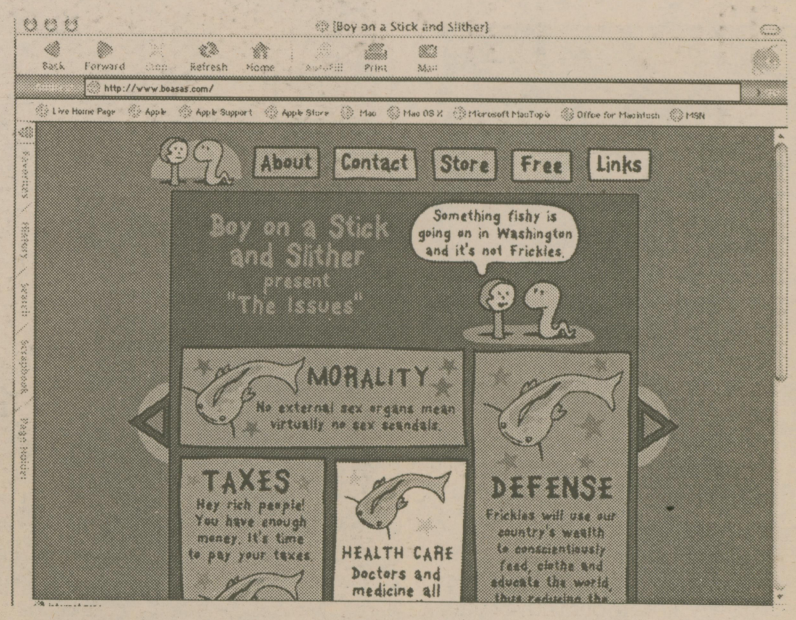
But they've been growing in popularity, quality and status as of late. The reasons why these are so much better than the syndicated ones are simple: their audiences are self-selected and no one can force their removal or modification. Mainstream newspaper comics need to be as bland and generic as possible to avoid offending the majority of mainstream readers. This creates comics focusing on sexist clichés–Kathy and Blondie–and good, wholesome family values, SUV included–Adam @ Home and Drabble–to name just a few.

Online comics and their writers are supported by banner advertising of related products, merchandise (usually T-shirts, stickers, books and buttons) and viewer donations, though most artists still have to keep a day job to help pay the bills. With this kind of support, the artist has license to create bizarre story lines and characters and use any kind of language they deem necessary.

The freedom from mainstream advertising pressure to not offend anyone means a greater ability to create story lines that interest and challenge the artists and writers, where they may use some imagery and language that may be offensive to those with a penchant for writing letters to the editor.

Comic topics can range from twenty-somethings–Something Positive (www.somethingpositive.net)–to gaming–Penny Arcade, (www.penny-arcade.com)–to a boy with no limbs and a stick for a body and his friend a snake–Boy on a Stick and Slither (www.boasas.com). These happen to be a few of my favourites, mainly because of the extreme levels of irreverence, swearing, and the fact that they're populated by people you would hate if you knew them, but love to watch at a safe distance.

The easiest way to find online comics is a Google search for "online comics" and once you get to one, simply follow links to others. Online artists seem to be incredibly supportive of each other, plugging sites of those they enjoy and thanking those who send people their way. I doubt Charles Schulz and Walt Disney were ever that cozy.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Boy on a Stick and Slither present "The Issues"
Something fishy is going on in Washington and it's not Frickles.
MORALITY
No external sex organs mean virtually no sex scandals.
TAXES
Hey rich people! You have enough money. It's time to pay your taxes.
HEALTH CARE
Doctors and medicine all
DEFENSE
Frickles will use our country's wealth to conscientiously feed, clothe and educate the world

Boy on a Stick and Slither is one of many online comic websites.

Online comics are addictive, archived for hours of pleasure, and for the most part absolutely free. If you're looking for cheap (read: free) entertainment for the summer and hooked up, online comics are an excellent, amusing time killer and the best procrastination tool I have yet to come across. And since Garfield hasn't been funny since you were eight, these strips can help you remember why you read comics in the first place.

Fellini's last great film bursts with imagery

by Briony Smith

Federico Fellini's classic 1973 film *Amarcord* is a beautiful movie about memory and the impressions the mind retains years after any accurate representations of events have faded into the ether of time passed.

Comprised of vignettes of life in a small Italian village in the 30s, *Amarcord* sings with impressions, colour, and the exaggerations that remain in place of what people and events might really have been like. Fellini understands that memory is about the bright red of a dress, the round hoops of Il Duce's Young Italian Girls, the spread of a peacock's tail amid swirling snowflakes.

Amarcord's setting lends itself well to this type of surreal impressionist filmmaking, as it is set during the early years of fascism's vise grip on the country. But like the rest of the film, Fellini's take on it leans toward the absurd, which is reflected in a scene where a man is punished by the local blackshirts for playing the "hymn of the subversives" to the townsfolk by being force-fed castor oil. While this may seem unpleasant, it is these crises of tiny scale that loom large in the memory of Titta (Bruno Zanin), the main character.

Fascism is lampooned in the film, but its nascent troubles echo the scary shores of adulthood that Titta seems frightened to maroon himself upon.

Although the film is funny, it is not a movie for anyone expecting the usual, linear plotline. *Amarcord* swims in and out of the seasons and features many different people and members of Titta's large family, but they are all archetypes, and the setting the universal landscape of childhood. Fellini preferred to dub his films in post-production, so the lines don't match up with the actors' mouths very cleanly. This gives you the impression that you may not know the words, but the tune is familiar. Watching it is like watching a movie of your own memories: you have a general idea of what your past looked like—your crazy uncle perched in a tree, or confessing your impure thoughts to the priest— but you often have to supply a new soundtrack, as if the old one has faded.

The film is funny but bittersweet in how it serves as the collective memory for anyone who has lived a full childhood.

There are a series of scenes where schoolboys sit in front of a handful of different teachers, each more ridiculous yet recognizable than the last: the detail-obsessed blowhard, the big-breasted task-master, the one who sips from a bottle under her desk...

Although *Amarcord* may take place at a very specific time and place, the film is a string of images and memories, colour and characters.

Watching *Amarcord* is like watching a film of your own life, although the characters may sound and look just a little different. *Amarcord* means "I remember" in the dialect of Fellini's youth, and this film is not only Fellini's memories, but the remembrances of everyone with a colourful past and memories that waver like the flash of a peacock feather in the snow.

Fellini's Amarcord *plays July 18 at Cinecenta.*

Beastie Boys bring the soundtrack of NYC to the people

Beastie Boys
To The 5 Boroughs
Capitol/EMI

by Angela Andersen

All you Klingons in the fuckin' house, Beastie Boys are sporting freshhhhhhhh attire on their new disc *To The 5 Boroughs*. Released in June, it is the first album self-produced by my favourite Jewish rappers. Light on the instruments and heavy on the turntables, I give it a six point seven (on the Richter scale).

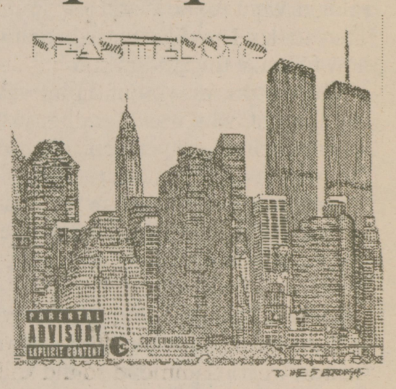
I put *5 Boroughs* into the player expecting to hear my anthems for the summer unfurl and uncurl in loop after tasty loop, rhyme after luscious rhyme. But this foray into Beastie-alism is a different animal. Oh sure, they got a bedazzler so their outfits tight and there's no doubt that when they rhyme, they rhyme the rhyme well. It's just that this isn't my soundtrack for the summer – it belongs to New York City.

Mike D sums it up this way: "For me, this album is, like, really New York City . . . everything that's happened in New York City the last two or three years, all of us living here and all that represents."

Opening track "Ch-Check It Out" has been released as the first single. It's some- kinda-catchy, but it doesn't quite represent the lyrical cohesiveness of the 14 other Beastie-works on this NYC notebook. "3 The Hard Way" has our mantis-MCs riding the elevated train in Brooklyn, "It Takes Time to Build" criticizes Bush's foreign policy and SUVs strung out on OPEC, "An Open Letter to NYC" is a pep talk for a worthy but weary berg and "We Got The" incites the chill and the ill alike to focus on change and rejection of the right-wing Christian coalition currently making decisions in the United States.

The not-so-subtle, albeit witty, call for revolution and involvement began to smack of the community spirit of Electric Company (that's Sesame Street for big kids). I am in total agreement, and yet I was wondering if I really needed to add 46:37 minutes of instructional American idealism to my repertoire.

The cover and liner notes feature drawings by architect Matteo Pericoli of the East and West Sides of the pretty gritty city but when I unfolded that skyline with the lyrics crammed between the skyscrapers, I got it – New York isn't just a crime-ridden, Trump-Towers-human-feces-on-your-shoe kind of



place. Nor is it the ultimate embodiment of a growing arrogance and imperialism that the world outside the United States has come to equate with New York. Adam Horovitz, aka Adrock, confessing his love for living in the U.S., says, "I love America for what it could be. It needs a lot of work [but] it doesn't have to be that hard."

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The spirit of SkaFest

by Jen King

It's difficult to explain the feeling at a ska concert when a euphoric crowd anticipates the first notes of a trombone before breaking down into the crazed, flailing dance known as "skanking."

"It's a high energy party...but also very warm and accepting," explains the organizer of this weekend's Victoria SkaFest, Dane Roberts. "This type of music attracts positive energy. Put people in a ska environment and they'll come out with a better attitude."

With bands from as far as Italy, Jamaica and Germany, organizers are juggling an exciting handful of artists. The 5th annual festival—July 15 through 17—has certainly evolved from its grassroots first year, where, scraping together enthusiastic advance ticket sales, it managed to accommodate well-known groups like Pressure Cooker and King Django (who returns this year), to bring down a house of appreciative fans.

Local groups that have matured with the support of the festival agree that Victoria has been an awesome community in which to produce this fusion of reggae, dancehall, jazz and even punk. The region's scene survived while some of the genre fell as decidedly poppy groups threatened commercialization of the spirit of ska. Ska songs are often the inverse of the type of self-aggrandizing found in rap and hip hop mc'ing. The reggae attitude of spreading optimism in the general population through music is still at the heart of the best of the genre.

Ska musicians also seem very self-motivated in managing and recording, and bands tend to be cooperative rather than competitive. This is why SkaFest began and why it has survived: the island just wants it bad enough.

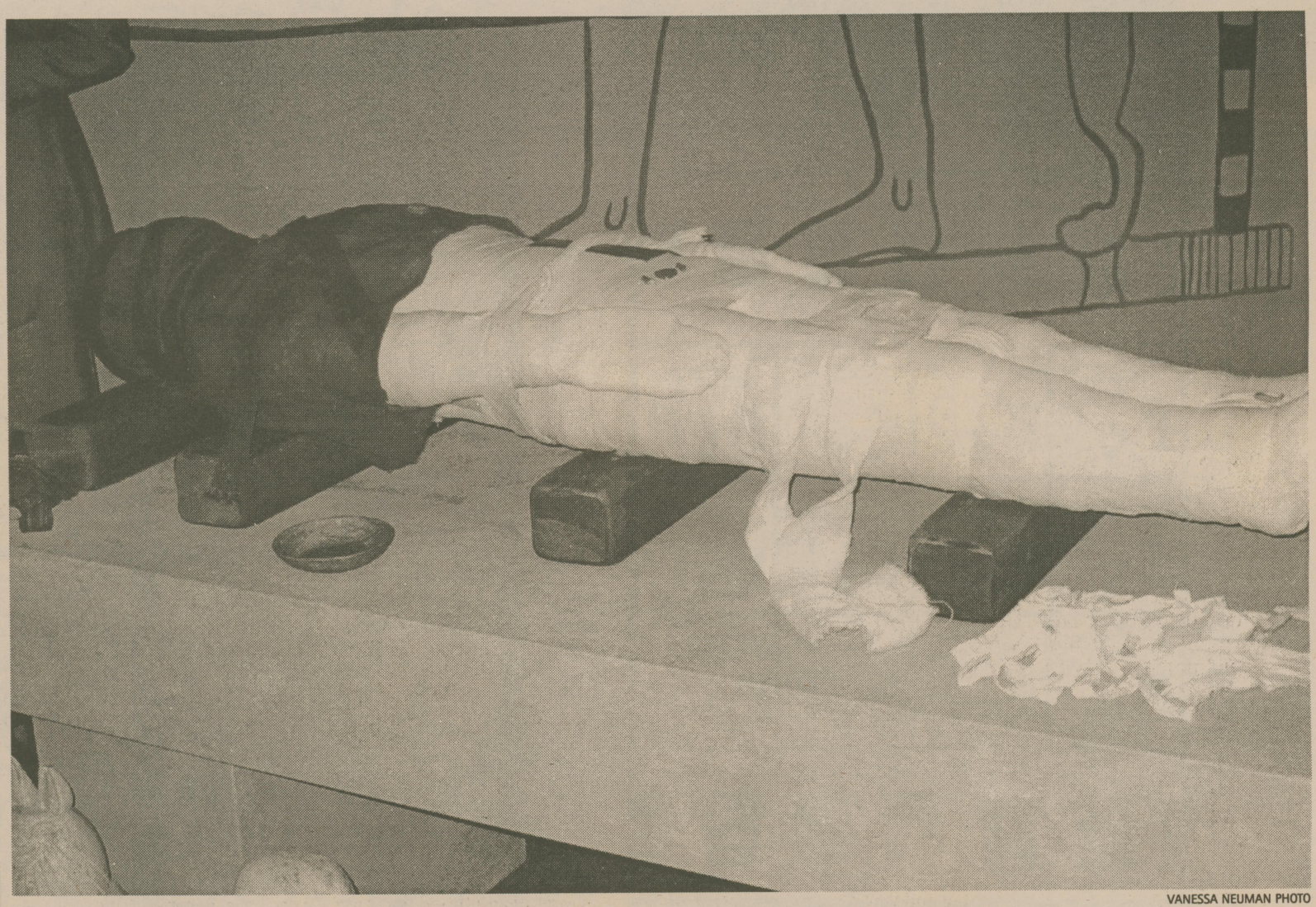
For the past five years word of the festival has traveled fast within the close-knit ska community. In May, visitors The Royal Winnipeg Porn Orchestra, The Skatomatics, and JFK & The Conspirators spent time between sets raving about the attraction of Victoria's West Coast lifestyle.

This year, the festival offers a more diverse sampling than past years. Strangejah Cole, an influential reggae musician from Jamaica, will headline at the Curling Club on Saturday with Ska Mob and the mysterious Califfo de Luxe. For the more rock-inclined, The Operators and their alt-rock, hammond sound will join Victoria's One Drop along with the jazz-inspired Soul Captives on Friday. A good introduction to the style would also be the opening night's lineup including The Kiltlifters as well as The Debonaires' dance-reggae.

Locals The Hoochy Girls will team up with Vancouver favourites Los Furios for a free show on Saturday. For deeper grooves and the occasional guitar wail, check out the Uprite Dub Orchestra, promising to deliver excellent new hip hop/jazz/reggae. They'll be sharing the free stage on Friday with feel-good local group Ten Too Late whose infectious hornlines and quirky lyrics guarantee to get audiences on their feet.

Luckily, you don't have to worry if you haven't skanked yet. Gare Hurn, trumpet player of The Hoochy Girls and V.I.S.A. Records Ska Jazz Orchestra advises saying "yes" to this off-kilter dance that even the most uncoordinated of friends will love. Alternately, you could simply watching the gleam of great instrumentalism. The choice is yours.

For complete listings and ticket info, visit www.victoriaskafest.ca.



VANESSA NEUMAN PHOTO

This faux-ancient fellow shows off his lovely apparel as a demonstration of how the ancient Egyptians mummified their dead.

Mummies come to town

Royal BC Museum hosting Eternal Egypt display; whole city gets on the bandwagon

by Vanessa Neuman

Camels. Deserts. Bustling bazaars and deadly curses. Mummies. The pyramids.

Egypt is perhaps one of the places most visited in our collective imagination and therefore one of the most clichéd as well. Why all the fascination? Perhaps it's because the great pyramids are the only one of the seven marvels of the ancient world that are still standing today. Perhaps it's because we are drawn to anything made of gold, and ancient Egypt seems to have left much of that behind.

To fuel our fire, the Royal BC Museum will be hosting Eternal Egypt from July 10 to October 31. The show is a large collection of pieces from the British Museum that are travelling the world while their permanent home is being renovated.

For anyone uninitiated in the world of Egypt collections, the British Museum's is widely regarded as one of the best outside of Cairo. With our museum being one of 10 chosen to host the pieces while they're in North America—and in of only three Canadian stops along the tour—the exhibit is a big deal. And it looks damned cool.

The 144 works on display are considered priceless, and include personal items from famous pharaohs, including Akhenaten, Amenhotep III, Tutankhamen and Ramesses the Great.

Among the artifacts are actual papyruses from a book of the dead, mummies in a specially constructed room (During the unveiling we had to leave abruptly because the TV cameras, lights and excessive amounts of people were raising the humidity too high. I hope they've worked that bug out.), a gold funerary mask and a huge granite lion that once guarded the tomb of Amenhotep III.

The one drawback will be the crowds, although the museum is trying to prepare itself as best they can—they've got timed tickets this time around. No waiting in crazy line-ups like when the DaVinci exhibit was in town.

With an economy that survives off of the tourist buck, this is a big deal for Victoria. No doubt about it, the rest of the businesses outside of the museum, especially those who are in the service industry and who stand to benefit from tourist dollars, are getting on the Egyptian bandwagon too.

Local pub Spinnakers, is making a special-edition beer—King Tut's Tipple—for the duration of the event. Made with Emmer wheat and lightly flavoured with figs and star anis for a Middle Eastern influence, it is—perhaps a bit surprisingly being as neither figs nor star anis bring to mind "good beer"—really good. Herald Street Café is also offering a special Middle Eastern menu (any food from that restaurant is good). Hotels will be selling Egyptian packages, the observatory is putting on special events and talks about the night sky of the pharaohs and there will be classes put on by the museum itself on aromatherapy, gardening etc.

The IMAX theatre will also be showing National Geographic's *Mysteries of Egypt* concurrently, and a deal on tickets is available if you visit both.

Being wary citizens of this city, forced into close proximity with hordes of tourists for four months out of the year, the question we want answered before we commit ourselves (and our personal finances) to the operation is, "We know that it will sell to out-of-towners, but should we go ourselves?"

The answer? If you're at all interested in ancient Egypt, go see the exhibit. I'd wager quite a bit of money that it's gong to rock. If not, go spend that $16.25 on beer at Spinnakers. Because it's summer and we can't save for tuition all the time.

Nekromantix lead the Danish invasion

Nekromantix
Dead Girls Don't Cry
Hellcat Records

by Ford Walker

With the release of their eighth full-length album, it seems like the Nekromantix led Euro-psychobilly invasion is not going to stop soon.

What's that you say? The Nekromantix? Psychobilly? Europe? OK, you have probably heard of the last one. No, psychobilly is not a raving mad goat; it's a new form of punk rock. And for those who hold that punk is dead, I assure you it is far from it.

Think of it this way: If Johnny Cash and Tim Armstrong (the lead singer of Rancid) were to have a sick, mutated, horror movie-loving child, it would be psychobilly. Already own every Reverend Horton Heat album? Still waiting for Mr. Cash to rise from the dead and put out something new? Get with it! Psychobilly is now the hottest, rocking-est shit coming from both this side of the pond and the other.

The title *Dead Girls Don't Cry*, probably makes you think these guys are either complete misogynists or haven't realized that Halloween was eight months ago. While I can assure you that the former is not true, the latter is spot on. The Nekromantix's sickening, macabre and outright hilarious lyrics blend horror movie themes with whip-smart dialogue.

With track titles like "What's On Your Neighbour's BBQ" and "Backstage Pass To Hell," the smiles never end. The most comic song on the album is "Struck By A Wrecking Ball," a track about getting too drunk at a show, trying to walk home and (you guessed it) getting killed by a wrecking ball. The best track, though, has to be "Ghoulina." This track displays the Nekro's ability to evolve and is definitely different that anything they've made before.

But this album has its flaws. Unlike their last album, *Return of the Loving Dead*, this one takes a while to get into. The tracks aren't terribly diverse, and the style can become repetitive and even tedious. It seems like Kim Nekroman (bass and lead vocals) may have been spending time on his new band the Horrorpops (with wife Patricia Nekroman) rather than time in the studio with his bandmates. In fact, it has been reported that this album was written and produced in only two weeks.

Don't get the impression, though, that this is not a great album, especially for those who aren't punk enough to have heard of these guys before. At a going rate of 10 bucks at Lyle's Place, this album is definitely affordable. So what are you doing? Stop reading this article, get on a bus and go buy this album! Your life can wait, but your ears cannot!

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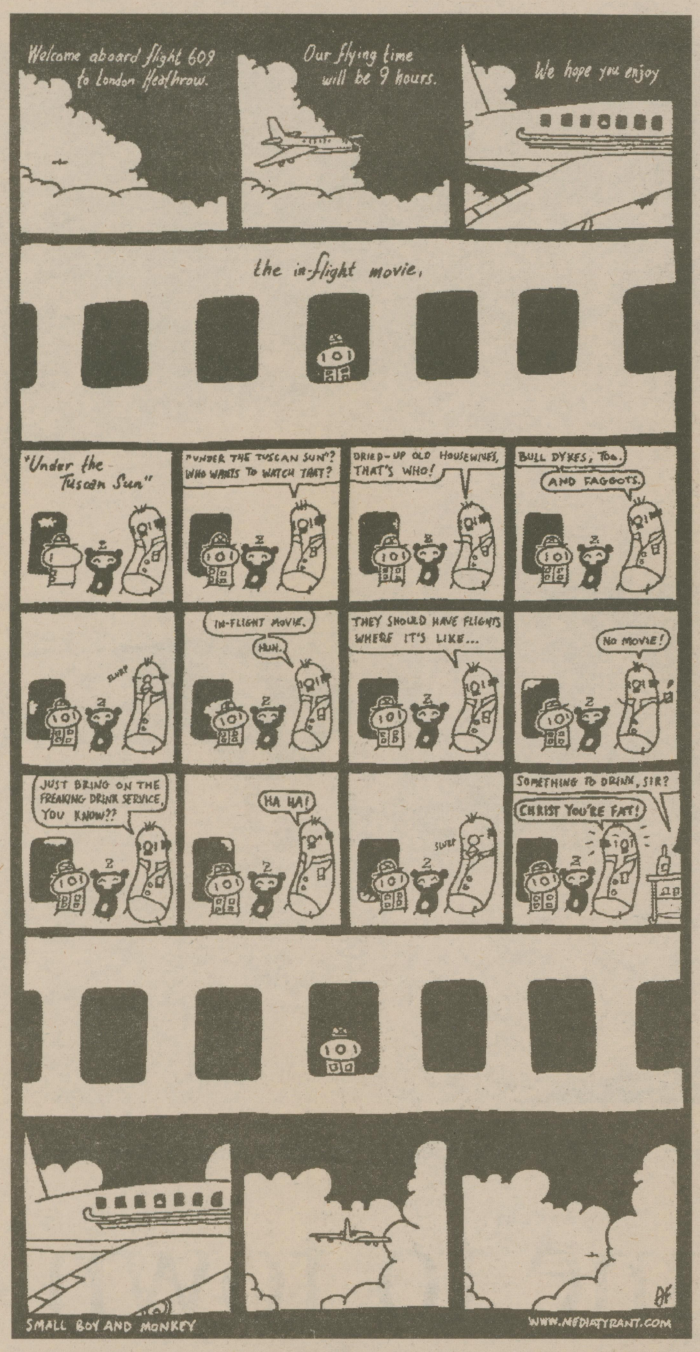
Welcome aboard flight 609 to London Heathrow.
Our flying time will be 9 hours.
We hope you enjoy
the in-flight movie.
"Under the Tuscan Sun"
"UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN"? WHO WANTS TO WATCH THAT?
DRIED-UP OLD HOUSEWIVES, THAT'S WHO!
BULL DYKES, TOO.
AND FAGGOTS.
IN-FLIGHT MOVIE.
HUH.
THEY SHOULD HAVE FLIGHTS WHERE IT'S LIKE...
NO MOVIE!
JUST BRING ON THE FREAKING DRINK SERVICE, YOU KNOW??
HA HA!
SOMETHING TO DRINK, SIR?
CHRIST YOU'RE FAT!
SMALL BOY AND MONKEY
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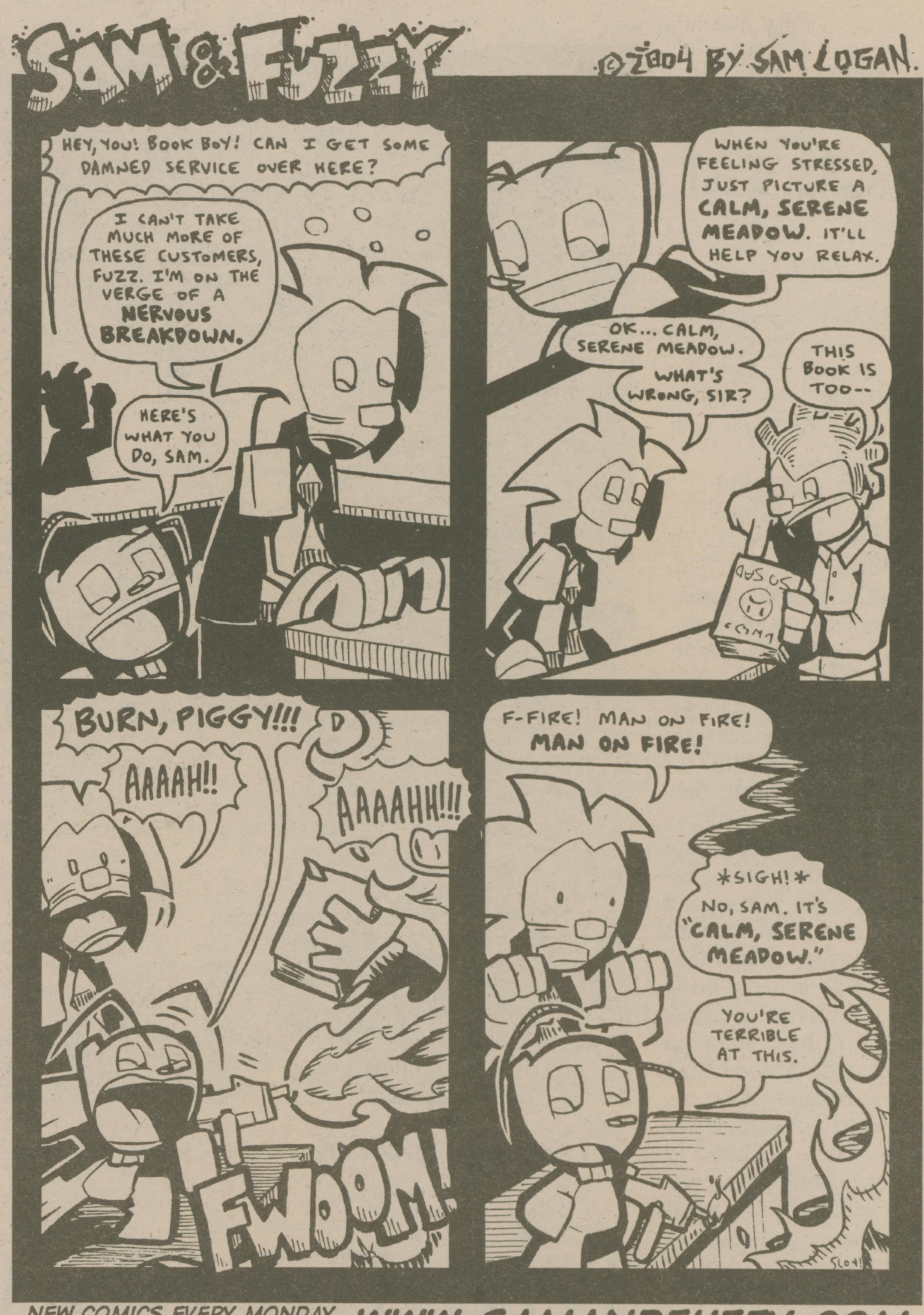
SAM & FUZZY
©2004 BY SAM LOGAN.
HEY, YOU! BOOK BOY! CAN I GET SOME DAMNED SERVICE OVER HERE?
I CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE OF THESE CUSTOMERS, FUZZ. I'M ON THE VERGE OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.
HERE'S WHAT YOU DO, SAM.
WHEN YOU'RE FEELING STRESSED, JUST PICTURE A CALM, SERENE MEADOW. IT'LL HELP YOU RELAX.
OK... CALM, SERENE MEADOW.
WHAT'S WRONG, SIR?
THIS BOOK IS TOO--
BURN, PIGGY!!!
AAAAH!!
AAAAHH!!!
FWOOM!
F-FIRE! MAN ON FIRE! MAN ON FIRE!
SIGH! NO, SAM. IT'S "CALM, SERENE MEADOW."
YOU'RE TERRIBLE AT THIS.

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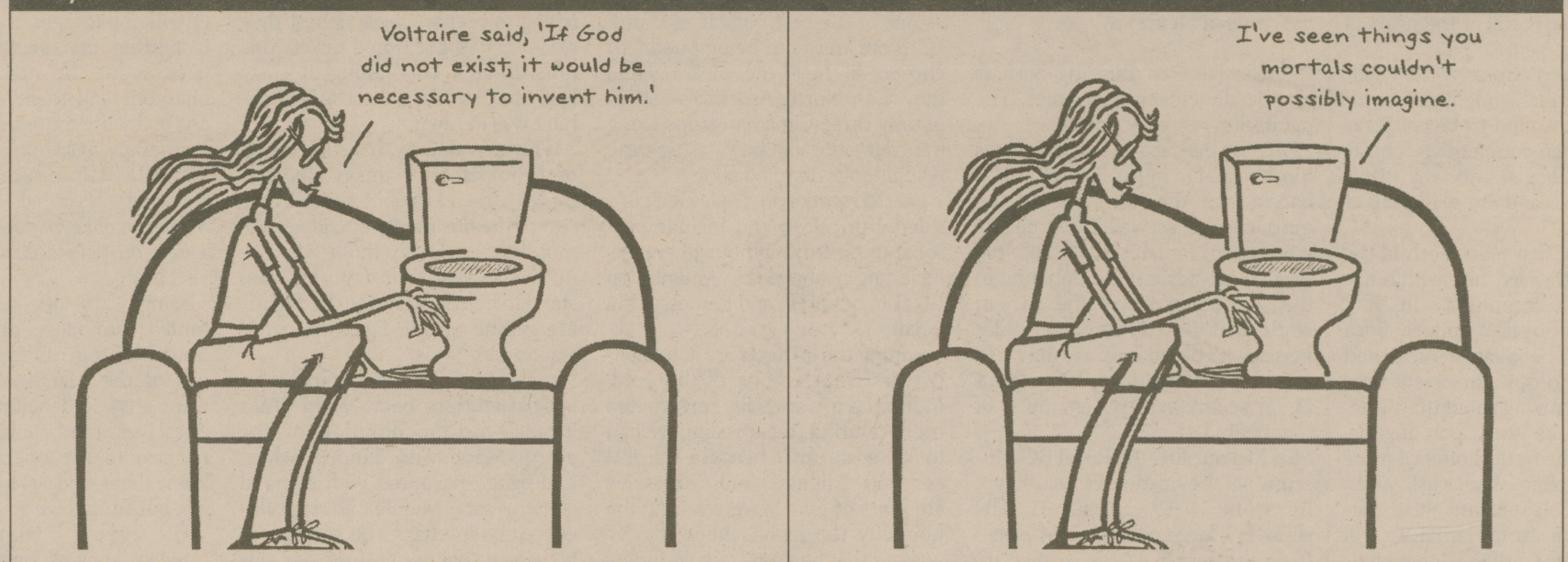
Lady & Commode

by Norman Ed Baskerville


Voltaire said, 'If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.'
I've seen things you mortals couldn't possibly imagine.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

DANCING IN THE PARK
The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society Branch Victoria and the Vancouver Island Scottish Country Dance Society invite you to come and join us every Thursday 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., July 8 to August 26 at the Cameron Band Shell in Beacon Hill Park. For further info. contact Jim Scott at 370-2359.

Celebrate British Columbia's newest wine region by bike! August 7 and 8. Join hundreds of cyclists on either a 1 or 2 day bike tour and pedal for a purpose in support of Multiple Sclerosis. Cyclists will experience beautiful Southern Vancouver Island, its wines, cuisines and breathtaking scenery. Call Jessie at the MS Society at 388-6496.

ARTISANS 2004- 10th annual show and sale of traditional and contemporary arts and crafts at the Mary Winspear Community Cultural Centre, Sidney. July 24 to August 8, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free. Daily draws, Artisans' demonstrations and silent auction. Contact Rob Vickery at 383-7914 or robvickery@shaw.ca

VENUS RISING!
The Greater Vancouver Island Sculptors Guild will have an exhibit and sale of sculpture created from a variety of materials to capture man's whimsical, emotional and imaginative relationship with the sea at The Maritime Museum of BC, Bastion Square, Victoria. Show runs from June 25 - October 17, 2004. Hours are daily from: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call (250)642-6065.

Garry Oak Ecosystem Restoration at Fort Rodd Hill - Volunteers Needed!!
Come out and join us in our efforts to remove the invasive species that threaten our rare Garry oak ecosystems. We'll take on daphne, blackberry and more! Saturday, July 17th at 10:00am. Meet at the Fort Rodd entrance kiosk. Contact Sarah Anning for details at: sarah.anning@pc.gc.ca (250) 361-6327

Volunteers Needed.
The Victoria Dragon Boat Festival needs energetic and high-spirited volunteers for their Festival August 13-15th in Victoria's Inner Harbour. If you're interested in meeting new people and having lots of fun please visit our website: www.victoriadragonboat.com and fill out a volunteer application form. Or call 704-2500.

BC's privacy commissioner wants to know what people think about the government's plan to contract out the administration of the Medical Services Plan, PharmaCare, and other public services to American multi-national corporations and subjecting your personal information to the FBI. Information about the issue can be found at www.righttoprivacycampaign.com.

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You with that self contented little smirk, yeah you know who you are. Just so you know, I have the God given right to do whatever I feel like. By extension, I can also do what I don't feel like. So the next time you see me having a lousy time, don't come around distracting me with anymore of your feigned concern.
Edwin Faust

May pineapples infest your closet.

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